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CANADA and CHRISTENDOM

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EDITORIAL

ECCE, NOVA OMNIA FACIO

The Editorial policy of Canada and Christendom is not devoted exclusively to the task of hanging crepe on the coffins of ecclesiastical carcasses (which have a distressing way of refusing to lie down), or to utter prolonged laments over rather obvious diseases which appear to have afflicted the Body of the Incarnate Lord in every age. It comes not to bury Canadian Anglicanism or to eulogise it. It is not so much concerned with it as with the destiny of Christianity in Canada. It is based upon the belief that Anglicanism has an indispensable role to play in fulfilling this destiny, but that belief does not include the conviction that it is being played in an irreproachably Christian manner.

It is a fact that part of the Church's activity must be concentrated on the infinitely prosaic tasks of revolving the monotonous wheels of the official machinery. But it is an alarming fact that so much attention should be paid to it, that it should be taken so seriously. We appear to have entrapped ourselves in a labyrinth of Synod reports, sub-committees and other bureaucratic paraphernalia, from which no effort seems capable of releasing us. It is the failure of the imagination which profoundly disturbs younger Christians in the Church to-day, and which compels them to dissipate their energies in whatever manner they can which does not implicate them in lubricating the official wheels.

Behind this imaginative myopia lies a combination of circumstances which are not compatible with the essence of Christianity. First of all is our profound mistrust of Nature (as created by God, and existing for God). We are not at home in the world, and we disclose a tendency to regard what transitory habitation it affords as a miserable, disreputable shack. We may have here in our earthly sojourn no continuing city, but on the other hand, is it not blasphemous to regard the temporal dwelling place as a kind of hovel? This is precisely the attitude which has produced those monstrous monuments of ugliness, whose interiors are submerged in a sea of varnish, which we have erected to the Glory of the Everlasting Beauty. Occasions of ecclesiastical import are marked by a studied neglect of the spectacular (as if the mere existence of man did not in itself involve an unfathomable dignity); and the clergy in their official capacities, suspecting the nobility of the rank to which the Spirit has raised them, shroud themselves in drab costumes whose sole enrichments are more often than not, those enviable tokens of academic distinction, to which all undergraduates aspire. Our music is the despair of anyone who can sing from memory the tune of the National Anthem; and whereas the odour of fried steak invokes within us expressions of almost religious fervour, the smell of incense in a church induces universal dyspepsia. Behind all this lies a theological misapprehension of the gravest kind. It is not attributable exclusively to the sombre, Puritan, Canadian character. When all has been said in extenuation of the facts -- and much has been said -- there remains the inescapable

conclusion that we have failed to take seriously the Christian doctrine of Creation.

On the other hand, and partly because of a latent dualism which refuses to acknowledge beer, frankincense, and Palestrina as gifts from God, we have tended more and more to confuse the works of man with the operations of Grace. Our much vaunted Prayer Book heritage is a case in point. Most of us are prepared to admit for the sake of historical exactitude, that the Canadian Book of Common Prayer did not issue Minerva-like, full blown and indefectible from the Head of God. Yet in practice our devotion to its verbal inspiration is notorious. We are deeply suspicious of religious patterns which do not conform to type. We regard spiritual experiences as queer excrescences upon our religious epidermis. The spirit of the Prayer Book, by an inevitable reversal which invariably follows the narrowing of vision and the stultification of the intellect, has become the letter of the Prayer Book. But if the Prayer Book is actually, as we believe it is, a rich fruit of God's Grace working upon the intellect and the heart of man, must we not be prepared to offer it up? Is it not conceivable that in this generation or some subsequent generation of Anglicans, someone might, under the inspiration of Our Lord the Spirit, feel constrained to behave and speak in a manner not altogether compatible with the letter of this book? We are obedient to the law, that eventually we may enjoy the freedom of the sons of God; and if in expression of this afflatus, sometime, somewhere, someone shall inadvertently leave his Prayer Book behind him, shall he be called an impious radical and an heretical libertine?

We are not willing that one jot or tittle of the Catholic Faith should be expunged, but we are convinced that the Spirit dots his own 'I's, and crosses His own 'T's. We work that no one shall be blown about by every gust of doctrine, but we devoutly hope that we shall have the imagination to rejoice when the mighty rushing wind of the Spirit, renewing the face of the earth, shall, through the instrumentality of persons abandoned to His omnipotent recklessness, refresh the Church of God. Ecce, Nova Omnia Facio.

PAUL TILLICH: THEOLOGIAN OF CULTURE

What is the relation between faith and culture? Between theology and philosophy? For some the integrity and power of the faith seems to presuppose religious withdrawal and theological isolationism. The issues of philosophy and culture generally may be interesting but they play no determining part in religious understanding or in theological expression. For others faith is little more than a vivifying adjunct of culture. Theology tends to be swallowed up in philosophy and becomes philosophy of religion. Anxiety in the face of the decline of a particular culture is also an anxiety about the religion which provides it with an ideological expression. For countless numbers, particularly on this Continent, the problem implicit in these questions never really occurs.

It has been said that the history of Christian theology is at all points determined by the particular questions which the Church discovers to be significant in each succeeding generation. What makes these significant? Without a doubt the deposit of faith raises its own peculiar questions as the Church seeks to explicate what is implicit. But if such questions are simply technical, or domestic in character, theology degenerates into formalistic and irrelevant scholasticism. Theology becomes relevant when the questions it seeks to answer spring from the cultural situation in which one lives. According to Paul Tillich an authentic theology arises out of the effort to correlate the specific questions of an age, implicit in its unresolved contradictions at all levels of experience, theoretical and practical (even the contradiction of theory and practice) and the answer embodied in the 'kerygma', and the tradition that is determined by the power to which the 'kerygma' bears witness. Neither the questions of culture and philosophy nor the answers of faith and theology are static even though these appear and re-appear with sufficient identity to classify them as 'types of philosophy' and 'patterns of culture', and credal definitions. For this reason there can be no 'theologia perennis'. In

addition to the specific questions which any culture raises there is the wider question of the meaning of human existence as such. This becomes acutely problematic in times of imminent or actual cultural catastrophe and there must be some experience of spiritual dismemberment before it can arise and provide the kind of shock necessary for reflection. That we live in such a time cannot be doubted seriously by anyone who can read the obvious signs of the times.

The greater part of Paul Tillich's life has been spent in Germany, that part of the Western world where the contradictions of our culture have reached the fullest maturity. For the past sixteen years he has been living and teaching in America. Is it unreasonable to expect from one who has been in intimate contact with the deepening tide of European despair and the mounting wave-crest of American optimism a discerning word about the storms of our times? It is this double and contrasting experience which awakens an initial respect at least, for what Tillich has to say. It is this life-situation which should qualify him for the deliberate task of being a theologian of culture.

Unlike Karl Barth, Tillich is convinced that the ultimate questions that lie buried in the confusions of Western culture must be taken seriously by the theologian if he would comprehend not only the character of his age but also the answer which faith is able to give to anyone living at this time. These determine both what the Church must say and what she must understand in respect of her mission. Barth is convinced that the only questions which have theological relevance are those which faith itself proposes; the questions of culture are so orientated that they prohibit theological answers. Tillich has more than once said that while Barth denies the relevance and fruitfulness of human questions with regard to the reception and understanding of revelation, he does in practice take such questions into account, and that his contemporary appeal in Europe is based on this. But the danger of Barth's theoretical principle lies precisely in its possibility of becoming practical as well and may lead at any time to a tragic indifference to cultural issues with a consequent retreat into Biblicistic piety and quietism. Barth's forthright

attack on Nazism showed how powerfully he can relate the resources of faith to historical crises, while maintaining that the latter are not determinative for an understanding of the former. But to-day he is manifesting an alarming indifference to the struggle between the East and the West which, at any rate, is more consistent with his theological position which asserts a radical discontinuity between the questions of this world and the concerns of God.

On the other hand Tillich is prepared to join hands with Barth in protesting against that liberal Protestantism which has sought to effect a synthesis between Western culture and the Christian faith. (It should be said however, that Barth regards Tillich as only a partially emancipated liberal!) It is to Tillich's credit that he has shown more clearly than any other how the unhappy liason between Protestantism and a bourgeois culture could have come into being. The negative results of Nineteenth century biblical criticism are seen to be the logical terminus of the Protestant principle of critical reason divorced from 'Catholic substance', i.e. a powerful sacramental and sacred tradition. In the early reformers, particularly Luther, this divorce was not actual, but it developed very early, re-inforced by Renaissance humanism. The end-result of rationalist criticism was the 'discovery' of a religio-ethical personality, Jesus of Nazareth, who upon closer examination is little more than the apotheosis of the 'bourgeois' gentlemen. The marriage of Western culture and the Christian faith becomes complete, with the latter losing its identity in the powerful masculinity of the former. As long as this state of affairs persists, the Church may be expected to disclose in her own life the confusion and contradictions of the secular order and ultimately, to share in its fate.

In spite of the fact that Tillich stands within the Reformed tradition his writings appeal strongly even to those who tend to regard the Reformation as a rather regrettable and unnecessary episode. One reason for this seems to be his insistence upon what he calls 'Catholic substance' as a basic ingredient in the Christian faith. He defines this as follows: 'the tradition in which the New Being has embodied and

expressed itself, before, in, and after its final manifestation in Jesus as the Christ'. But 'tradition' means something more than a book or an institution or sacramental elements. These latter are ever in danger of enclosing and 'demonizing' the 'tradition' or 'substance' through biblicism or ecclesiaticism or sacramentalism. Catholic substance is always in danger of becoming 'thingified'. Historically, Protestantism came into being at the point where Catholic substance had become rigidly substantive and therefore demonic. But the Protestant principle is older than historic Protestantism and even Christianity itself. It is to be found in the Hebrew prophets pre-eminently, but also in Greek rationalism. It is 'the critical power of the prophetic and rational spirit' whose creative function is to prevent the distortion of the sacred tradition. The future of historical Protestantism is problematic, but the Protestant principle is a perennial ingredient with Catholic substance of the Christian faith.

What has this dialectic of substance and principle to do with the interpretation and transformation of culture? For Tillich the basic diagnosis of our culture cannot be undertaken by the sociologist although he does not discredit sociological investigation. Culture is at its heart a theological manifestation. Its ultimate questions and the answers it proposes as well, are matters to which the theologian must address himself. These questions are usually implicit in the irreconcilable tensions which obtain at all levels of life and thought. The development of Western culture is seen to be the dispeller of tragedy. Protestantism revolting violently against its Catholic substance, has, through the extravagant misuse of its constitutive principle, helped to inaugurate this development. This goes far in the direction of explaining some of its embarrassment and impotence in this day. Its destiny is contingent upon its self-understanding in this respect, and consequently its understanding of that culture which has exploited to the limit its cardinal principle. It is also dependent upon a new appreciation of Catholic substance which provides the Church with that power by which it rides out the catastrophic storms of each succeeding generation and provides a 'holy' basis for the whole of life in history. An authentic Christian theology will resist both the autonomous reason which splits life into innumerable and unrelated

'departments', and the heteronomous reason which encloses life within a system (political, ecclesiastical, economic, etc.) and enforces a static unity which dishonours God and man.

W. R. Coleman

The following is a list of Dr. Tillich's major writings in English which have some bearing on the subject outlined above. Attention is specially directed to his use of such expressions as these: Sacred void, Kairos, Autonomy, Heteronomy and Theonomy. These are dealt with in all of the books mentioned here.

The Interpretation of History (Scribners, 1936)

The Religious Situation

The Christian Answer (ed. by H.P. Van Dusen) Chapter 1

The Protestant Era (University of Chicago Press, 1948)

The Shaking Of The Foundations (Scribners, 1947)

Sermons

ANGLICANS AS A CLASS

The relationship of church membership to social class has been a subject of interest to American sociologists concerned with community studies during the last twenty-five years.

In the United States it has been found that the bulk of Episcopalian membership has been in the upper social and income brackets, with the remainder being in the lower income levels rather than in the middle class. So identified is membership in the Episcopal Church with high status that social mobility studies have found that many people climbing the social ladder become Episcopalians so that their religion will be appropriate to their social standing. Churchmanship thus, has become equivalent with other symbols of prestige, such as a home in a fashionable neighbourhood, membership in the "right" clubs and loyalty to the Republican party!

No such studies have been done in Canada, but it

is not unreasonable to suggest that Anglicanism in Canada is not as closely linked to high social position. However, even if to be an Anglican is not to wear the badge of high rank, it has become evident that the Anglican Church is having less attraction for members of the lower stratum. Like most of the major Protestant denominations, our church has become more and more identified with the middle and upper classes. As one theological professor commented, "We have had greater success in appealing to pygmies in African jungles than in attracting the working people of our own country."

This development has serious ramifications for the future of the Church in Canadian cities. Our down-town churches are empty unless they can appeal to residents of up-town districts. So weak is our hold on the lower classes that when the social status of a parish begins to decline, the rector and wardens become alarmed and appeal for endowments, for they know that Anglicanism has little attraction for poorer folk.

This problem increases in its magnitude as the lower class areas of the city expand. In Toronto, for example, a movement by younger families to the suburbs is resulting in the decline of many neighbourhoods which once were middle class districts. Many clergy predict the steady dwindling of their congregations because, as they describe it, "the Anglicans are moving out". Yet, their parishes remain well populated. In most cases the number of non-church people among the newcomers would be enough for any parish to handle.

To attract these people is no mean task however, and the average person, himself a member of the middle class, is ill equipped to do it. Whether we like to admit it or not, most clergy just do not have the "know-how" for this type of work. Hence, it is imperative that churchmen develop new methods of presenting Christianity to rooming-house residents, slum dwellers and members of lower class neighbourhoods.

It is encouraging to see the vision and initiative displayed by rural clergy and laymen in their attempts to work out a new program for rural areas. This is

certainly true of those in the Diocese of Toronto who have shared in the work of the "Rural Church" Committee. It would be a step in the right direction if the synods of urban dioceses were to establish similar groups for the Church in industrial areas. In any case, action must be taken soon, for if we do not attack the problem at once, it is more than likely that before a generation has expired, our church in the cities will be relegated to the suburbs. The problem of down-town churches, therefore demands immediate attention.

R. F. Stackhouse

INTER - COMMUNION

"The unity of which intercommunion is the necessary form and sign is one of faith and hope as well as of love."

F. J. Hall

TEN CHURCHES' ENVOYS EMBARRASSED BY BID TO JOINT COMMUNION---well, with a headline like that you have to read to the bitter end the report of a lively half-hour in the Canadian Council of Churches assembled in Winnipeg on 25th of November. (Weep for us St. Catherine, if the jus liturgicum will permit no more).

I can lay no claim to consistent misquoting (let alone quoting) by the press, but if the Staff Correspondent of the Toronto Star is to be trusted, an Anglican Archbishop, who issued the invitation to '99 representatives from 10 non-Roman communions', reportedly said, 'I am doing this entirely on my own responsibility, and not on behalf of the Anglican church'. Those whose consciences might be pricked were comforted with the assertion 'that it is quite all right. This is a free country'.

A major of the Salvation Army expressed genuine astonishment that 'we cannot take the Lord's Supper together..... It seems to me that the Lord's table is one place to which we should all be able to come. I

know I would have enjoyed it'.

Having now committed the sin of being topical and venturing to disagree with living men, not academic, harmless straw men, I must admit that I am unshamefacedly unrepentant. For the sacraments of the Church are not the private possession of the individual bishop or priest. They are Christ's in the Church and some are set apart to be their stewards. As for Canada being a free country, I shall not dare to declare which is the greater freedom--to be able not to sin, or not to be able to sin--but I shall try to keep my liberty from being a cloke for licence.

Lambeth of 1930 states that 'members of the Anglican Churches should receive the Holy Communion only from ministers of their own church'. There can be little reality in participating in a ceremony performed by men who are not competent, and who do not intend, to offer the Christian Sacrifice. The most that could be expected from joining with those who have departed radically from the fellowship in holy things, the essential structure of the Church, would be a further adventure in fellowship which would make more haunting the sorrow of the unrealized sacramental communion.

Inter-communion under such circumstances was happily not intended in the above case. But if such an occasion should arise it must be borne in mind that the act of communion depends on the offering of a true sacrifice in the Eucharist, and the sacrifice is possible because of the true presence of Christ upon the altar. In the act of communion our lives are joined to that of our crucified, risen, and glorified Lord, deepening our initial baptismal union with Him and with all other baptized persons. The Eucharist does not express the unity of the Church but rather is the cause of the unity. To join in a service whose very reason for existence is that it is not the Catholic Eucharist is not a valid method of achieving the longed-for unity. Nemo dat quod non habet--it cannot be the cause for it cannot give what it does not possess.

What shall we say of a general invitation to our own altars even though we may not resort to the rites of those who have by expressed intention rejected the full fellowship in the unity established by God? The invitation is usually issued with the sincere intention of effecting or promoting Christian unity, therefore the admission of the uninitiated is inexcusable for they cannot receive the grace of the sacrament, and the intention is not possible of fulfilment. The invitation at Winnipeg was extended to Protestant bodies, though there were exceptions, who normally require Baptism but which were not capable of completing Christian Initiation by Confirmation. The dominant Patristic view would condemn the administration of the Holy Communion to those who were not confirmed, and the Prayer Book only permits, not rejoices in, the practice.

The casual admission to the Holy Communion of those who are not fully initiated, and do not intend to put themselves within the normal sphere of grace in which the Christian acts, exhibits the emphasis on the personal act of receiving which distorts the balance of the Eucharistic action. Communion is made possible by oblation and sacrifice. Is it possible for the uninitiated to make an oblation? Conscious worship of the true God with a true faith is possible only to those who have been duly initiated into the Body of Christ so that they are in contemporary relation to God. Those who would go to the altar of God must come bearing their oblation in visible communion with the Church. The crucial question is not of admitting people to communion, but of assuring that people are competent to make the Offertory.

Winnipegs and Little Winnipegs will not help us to achieve unity, for the ground of the Church's unity is her participation in the unity of God the Holy Trinity, for the Church as the Body of Christ is the Son of God. The Church is One--though the Christians in it are divided. If we leave the realm of truth for sentimentality, abjure faith for expediency, and make hope a capitulation to the mistakes of men instead of the response of human endeavour to the promise of God, we shall prove ourselves unworthy to have any portion in the Family of God.

